

THE EVOLUTION OF BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

A detailed photograph of a black and orange bird, possibly a Tanager, perched on a light-colored branch. The bird has a black head and back with bright orange underparts and wings. It is looking towards the right. To its right is a cup-shaped nest made of dry twigs and grass, containing several young birds. One young bird is prominently visible with its mouth wide open, showing a bright red interior. The background is filled with green leaves and branches, creating a natural, forest-like setting.

FOREWORD

J. FENWICK LANSDOWNE

Greatest Bird Painter of the 21st Century

FOREWORD

By combining skill and knowledge with a unique quality of perception, an artist produces something interesting and pleasing. It may be a picture and, in fact, the word “artist” brings to mind that deft manipulator of brushes, the painter. However, the same visual artists work not with paints and brushes but with cameras, and their pictures are photographs, not watercolors or oil. Through using different media and techniques, photographers and painters have one thing in common, the ability to see as beautiful things that to others are ordinary and the desire to share this vision with those who do not have it.

In the pages that follow are photographs of birds, pictures of exquisite sensitivity that capture their subjects with wonderful immediacy. They are among the finest of their kind and the images - a dipper with a wriggling, neatly held water insect or a humming bird back-peddling from a nectar-dropping columbine blossom - remain in the mind’s eye long after the book is closed.

The saddest duty of photographs is to record what has gone. Here, in the pictures of Isidor Jeklin and Donald Waite, they have a happier task; that of the showing us, evocatively and beautifully, what we have still.

As the unspoiled parts of the world shrink and ebb away, receding deeper into the Dreamtime of the past, photographs such as these become more important. They renew our pleasures in wild things and serve to remind us that our vital link with the earth and its values must remain unbroken.

Victoria, B.C.
October, 1983
J. Fenwick Lansdowne

941 Victoria Avenue
Victoria B.C.
V8S 4N6

January 10th, 1984

Dear Don,

—Thank you for your letter and manuscript.

I am sending the latter back in case you need it for another time.

Certainly, use my little hint where and how you wish. I can see nothing in the text that I would presume to change. I'm looking forward to the book's appearance.

Yours sincerely,
Jennick Jenson

AN EARLY HISTORY OF BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

BY DAMON S. CALDERWOOD

When Nicéphore Niépce invented the first camera in 1816, he could hardly have imagined the heights to which photography would soar 200 years later. Our fascination with art in its many forms has been well-documented through the centuries, and mankind's depictions of nature have been discovered dating back several thousand years. It is not surprising, then, that one of the most popular subjects of photography over the last 100 years has been wildlife, and in particular, birds. The famed poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley once wrote:

*Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*

*Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.*

*In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.*



John James Audubon's painting of a
Roseate Spoonbill - *Platalea ajaja*
Courtesy of the John James Audubon Centre at
Mill Grove in Audubon, Pennsylvania;
the Montgomery County Audubon Collection;
and Zebra Publishing

It certainly isn't hard to see why birds have inspired every kind of artist from time immemorial. But when the art of photography began to evolve in the 20th century from black and white to colour and finally to a digital format, thousands of people turned their eyes to the sky in the hopes of preserving the beauty they saw on a daily basis, almost as if they realized in their collective subconscious that what they were trying to preserve was slowly disappearing.

In the ever-expanding field of bird photography there have been many pioneers. One of the earliest was William Lovell Finley (1876-1953), whose interest in conservation merged with his passion for photography. The results included dozens of photographs of birds interacting with their offspring as well as many shots of birds' nests in situ containing eggs or young. Finley's interest in the breeding biology of birds began to bring attention to his other causes, and helped to foster a greater public interest in the welfare and conservation of birds.

Many years later Hal Harrison finished in colour what Finley had started in black and white: a comprehensive guide to North American birds' nests. Arthur Allen brought his scientific studies of birds at Cornell University into the photographic arena, most famously documenting in stills and even filming one of the last pairs of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the wild in 1935. In addition, Allen was the first photographer to capture images of a Bristle-thighed Curlew nest, eggs and young in western Alaska in 1948.

A PASSION BECOMES AN OBSESSION

INTRODUCTION

It's hard to believe I became involved in the photography of birds at the nest over 50 years ago and if I'd known then what I know now and its cost for my passion turning into an obsession there would be no chance in Hell of me ever stepping into a forest to even look at a bird. It cost me a big fortune. It cost me a marriage. It caused me to have a mental breakdown. It's my most sincere hope that neophyte bird nest photographers can learn from the mistakes of the pathfinders of the past. The advances in cameras in just the past few years is nothing short of miraculous and the increase in ornithologists' knowledge about our feathered friends has grown exponentially. It's very likely we've learned more about the lives of birds in just the past 10 years than all the preceding years. Watching adult birds doing their daily task of caring for their young is so fascinating that it can become an obsession. The hardest thing in a memoir is to get everything in chronological order.

In the beginning, I wrote to everyone and anyone to garner knowledge about bird nest photography. On the top of the list was the Audubon Society (The premier environmental non-profit society focused on the conservation of birds and their habitats) and The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (The globally renowned college of higher learning dedicated to the study, appreciation and the conservation of birds). In 1984, the exchange of correspondence between staff at Cornell and me suggested we were penpals!

If someone had told me back in 1974, when I began photographing birds at the nest that in 2007 I'd be charged criminally for photographing a family of birds that didn't die I'd have thought it absurd. That's exactly what happened. The potential for fines was a staggering \$2,250,000. A few of the 'So Heavenly Bound they were not Earthly Good' birders in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley scrutinized a book I co-authored in 1984 and one my company published in 2007. They were intended to show people the beauty of birds. Instead, birders read every line and studied every picture to show only the negative. None acknowledged the beauty of birds. None admitted I was part of a sting operation costing the Canadian taxpayers in excess of \$1,000,000. None acknowledged my mental breakdown.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY, 1974 UNTIL 1986

When bird nest hunter Glenn Ryder walked into my Maple Ridge camera store in the spring of 1974 looking for a long lens for his camera system, I had no way of knowing

this chance meeting would result in a profound change in my life. He had been hired by the provincial government to assist in the production of a four volume set of books about the 'Birds of British Columbia' being planned by R. Wayne Campbell, the Curator of Birds and Mammals at the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria. Glenn was leaving shortly for a few months of bird nest searching in the Okanagan Valley with a photographer who was not remotely aware of the challenges of bird nest photography. It was Glenn's job to find nests for the photographer. Glenn showed me several of the shooter's slides and I recall thinking, with a little practice, I should be able to do as well at bird photography. His images never made it into the book series simply because he knew so little about his subjects. He groomed nests by removing vegetation thereby exposing baby birds for long periods of time without proper shade from the sun.

About this time, a camera store employee loaned me a copy of Eliot F. Porter's book, 'Birds of North America, A Personal Selection' and many a night I studied Eliot's beautiful bird portraits. His incredible images appeared in North America's two volume National Geographic's 'Songs and Garden Birds' and 'Water, Prey and Game Birds' in 1964. Eliot used high-speed strobes to capture flight photographs of parent birds coming in to brood, feed and do janitorial duties with their young. Elliot's photographs contributed half of the books' image content while Canada's Sir Allan C. Brooks', a much decorated sniper in the First World War, paintings made up the rest of the content for the two volumes. Allan's home was in Vernon, a city in the Okanagan. It must have been providence that I met Arthur M. Peake at the local coffee shop and learned years earlier he had been an assistant to Brooks. Art used a shotgun to shoot the birds to be used as specimens for Allan to paint.

The following spring, I photographed some birds at nests but they almost always ended in failure due to my lack of knowledge. In the beginning, my attempt to photograph several nests in a single day was sheer stupidity. Art gave me access to his many shelves of books on ornithology and I slowly began to understand the habits of my feathered friends and how to find nests. Eventually, I began to photograph a single family of birds over several days. It was best to wait until after the babies opened their eyes to begin photography. The parent birds, with so much invested, never abandoned their babies.

After locating a nest with eggs or young, I should have waited until the babies' eyes opened and then begin to take photographs until they fledged. The last day is always most interesting because the parents and babies were used to my strobes, my blind and me. If the nest was exposed with the use of tiebacks, it was imperative to put everything back to normal and even add cover to further conceal the nest.

When first beginning to photograph birds, I was far too impatient and my subjects suffered as a consequence. In most cases the entire session lasted only one day and the birds were not given the opportunity to adjust to my presence. As a novice bird photographer, I was unable to find anyone with whom to apprentice and authors of books on the subject, although all emphasized the welfare of the birds must be first and foremost, never went into any details about their mistakes and how to avoid them. All of them stressed any photography at a nest attracted predators such as rats, squirrels, weasels, snakes, hawks and owls. Predators have to eat meat to stay alive. It's the circle of life.

By 1977, I was averaging 40 hours a week in the forest during the months of April through July. During this trial and error period, I met Stan Pavlov who said he could find more nests in a day for me to possibly photograph in a week. He was managing an estate of 160 acres nestled under the peaks of the Golden Ears Mountains north of Maple Ridge. Discovering the truth of his claim, we soon became good friends. Stan became my assistant and we began spending more and more time exploring his property in search of birds.

My notebook for 16 May 1978 shows how little I knew about the length of time Varied Thrush young stayed in the nest, 'contained three week old young.' 15 April 1979, 'Found dipper nest under bridge over Blaney Creek at UBC (University of British Columbia) Research Forest. It was found within a yard of where Stan Jr. found one last year. It looked like a miniature-sized moss igloo and was built on top of a rock'. 19 April, 'Up to UBC to photograph the dippers but the creek had come up two feet due to rains making the task difficult and dangerous.' 28 April, 'Checked chickadee nest. Bumblebees had taken over.' 11 June 1980: (Marsh Hawk) 'Left at 7:15. Coming home, I found the tide had come in and had to wade through water almost to my armpits. A beaver swam up behind me and hit the water with its tail causing me to genuflect the knees & take in water at both armpits. I could have drowned.' 16 June: 'No luck, drizzle turned into a downpour. Young (Nighthawks) became lethargic so I warmed them by cupping hands and breathing on them for 10 minutes. They recovered.' 10 June 1981: Saw crow clean out a robin's nest. Flew up into the nearest tree and literally beat the life out of the young bird with its powerful beak. 11 June: Spent entire day photographing crows. The adults regurgitated food for the young. They spent the day sleeping, preening, stretching, yawning and dumping. The ready to fledge babies would rise up out of the nest with pink mouths fully agape each time a parent came near the nest.' I was unknowledgeable about my subjects and my actions were unconscionable.

In January, 1981, I flew to Edmonton to meet well-known bird photographer Thomas J. Webb. His razor-sharp competition prints made me realize I was not filling

the frame tightly enough and my flash equipment was not capable of stopping the quick movements of birds in flight resulting in blurred pictures and on returning home most of my pics went into a trash can. Tom suggested purchasing an extremely powerful high-speed custom strobe system to photograph birds in flight. Tom's unit was similar in many ways to the lighting system I used in my portrait and wedding studio utilizing front, side and back lighting. I contacted Ken Olson, its manufacturer, and ordered one of his flash units.

PHOTOGRAPHING SEABIRDS, TRIANGLE ISLAND, 1981

In August, 1981, I had a rare opportunity to visit Triangle Island, a seabird reserve, located in the Pacific Ocean north of Vancouver Island. It is world-renowned to ornithologists since it has an enormous bird population comprised of Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Tufted Puffins, Pelagic Cormorants, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots and Common Murres. Richard J. Cannings, Assistant Curator of the Vertebrate Museum at the University of British Columbia, and I flew by helicopter to the remote island. Anne Vallée, a doctoral student, was collecting data for her thesis on 'The Breeding success of the Tufted Puffin' on the seabird reserve. Upon reaching the island, we were greeted by Robin Cohen, Anne's assistant. The two young women were staying at a base camp in a trailer they had named the Triangle Hilton.

Almost immediately, Robin, Dick and I left camp to climb Puffin Rock, a steep 700-foot ascent, to visit Anne. She came out of her blind to greet us. She had been watching the comings and goings of seabirds with a spotting scope.

The bird I especially hoped to photograph on Triangle Island was the Rhinoceros Auklet, a most challenging task since the parent rhinos exchanged brooding duties at night and only for a couple of days before the two babies make their dash to the ocean.

One night, I set up a flashlight with an infrared acetate over its lens and directed its narrow beam to a gizmo that in theory fired the camera any time an adult broke the faint red glow of light when going into its burrow. I took up a position on a cliff face in the pitch darkness and heard a number of birds crash land in the tufted hairgrass and salmonberries. After landing, the adult would begin making a mewling call which was answered by a chick. When I turned on my headlamp, I saw a most attractive bird with an orange-brown bill with horn—hence the name rhinoceros—and white plumes behind its eye and bill. It made sense that if I was able to see the faint red glow from 50 feet away, there was no possibility of any pictures. When a rhino took off from a cliff and hit me squarely on the back of the head, I decided to come down and call it quits. All I had managed to photograph was a deer mouse. The only worthwhile photograph of a

seabird I managed to obtain on the entire trip was of a colony of Common Murres nesting on the ledges of the precipitous cliffs. The spot where I set up the camera and tripod had to be one of the smelliest places on earth. Murres are highly sociable seabirds and live in large colonies. One cliff shelf, quickly estimated, contained at least 500 birds. For survival against marauding crows and gulls, murres breed synchronously incubating their eggs and brooding their young at the same time. When the chicks finally leave their rock shelves all at once and plunge 200 to 300 feet into the sea, the bonanza for predators is short-lived because of the brief time the young birds are exposed. I was regrettably the cause of incubating and brooding murre parents to fly off the cliff leaving a shower of eggs and babies to fall into the ocean. The pilot of a jet from Canadian Forces Base Comox happened to see me perched on the cliff face and decided to do a flyby for a looky-loo. I tried to wave him off but instead he flew right over me and we could see each other's eyeballs. It was a case of the Air Force not being told Triangle Island was a seabird reserve.

Some notes from my trip: 19 August: 'From 10:00 p.m. to 3:45 a.m. spent curled up on the side of a cliff hoping to photograph a Rhino Auklet coming to its nest. Attire consisted of wool socks, hiking boots, blue jeans, 2-T shirts, cotton shirts, wool sweater, cotton vest, nylon coated rain pants and jacket, wool gloves & headlamp and two scarves across my face. From 10:00 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. quite a number of birds came in. Their landings were very rough in the salmonberry and tufted hair grass. Saw one adult with six inch long skinny fish hanging from its mouth. Saw a brown rabbit feeding on hair grass. Saw mice. Once I heard the whir of wings and instinctively brought my hands up to cover my face. One bird upon taking off immediately above me hit me on the side of the head. Heard the crashing of the waves. As it became darker, it also became much windier and colder. At one two hour stretch from 12:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. it was extremely dark. The birds communicated by adults making mewling or moaning sounds. The adults walked to the burrows from wherever they landed. Their arrival in the pre-dawn light seemed to be the smoothest. Gave up at 3:45 a.m.' 20 Aug: 'Took shots of Robin weighing puffin chicks & taking wing measurements. She took ticks off 1 puffin chick'. It occurred to me. Why was she interfering with Anne's study by removing the ticks?

Anne returned to Triangle Island the following year to continue her research, but unfortunately lost her footing while climbing Puffin Rock and fell to her death. Two years later, in 1984, Anne's father came to British Columbia from Quebec for the purpose of presenting a cheque to a graduate student at Simon Fraser University to study seabirds. We met with an associate professor and had lunch. I casually mentioned exchanging correspondence with the Victor Hasselblad Foundation's research and development department about the possibility of placing a movie or video camera on top of their still

camera so a photographer could study the activities of birds on a monitor from a distance and fire the camera remotely when the subject struck the right pose. The university's ornithologist became quite excited and suggested supplying him with copies of our correspondence to make an application to the foundation for a grant. He explained some of the money would be earmarked to purchase a camera-video system for me to test on seabirds. Unluckily for me, things didn't work out but the university still received a \$25,000 grant.

GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL

That fall, I interviewed Dr. Patrick Moore, President of Greenpeace International, about the impact of man's activities on nesting areas of seabirds. The most obvious concern was from a major oil spill from super tanker traffic coming from Valdez in Alaska, at the northern terminus of the Alaskan Pipeline, which comes down along the whole coast of British Columbia and then southward all the way down to the Panama Canal. He said an oil spill given the types of winters and the fact machinery always sooner or later breaks down would inevitably result in a major disaster to seabirds and if it occurred off the north end of Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, or off the Alaskan Panhandle, it could mean the destruction of millions of seabirds from one tanker spill. Another real serious problem was the depletion of the food supply for large nesting colonies of seabirds up and down the west coast shoreline and on the many islands. There are tremendous fleets of foreign ships operating just off the coast dwarfing the types of fishing boats used by Canadian fishermen. Their nets are scooping everything off the sea bottom leaving it barren. Deep sea gill net fishing has a tremendous bycatch of seabirds with nine mile long nets. The 300 boats in their fleets operate close to the islands and diving birds are caught by the thousands. Supertankers are more likely to get into trouble when just offshore due to rocks, the build up of currents, cross eddies and waves bouncing off the rocky coastline resulting in a much more confused and dangerous sea. Canadian laws demand seven and eight hundred foot long super oil tankers stay outside the 200 mile limit. If one of these ships broke up off the coast of Vancouver Island, half of the shoreline could be inundated with oil depending on the weather, currents and location of the spill. Another serious problem was the habitat destruction caused by intensive logging operations along the BC coast reducing the available area for birds nesting in old growth timber. He mentioned overfishing on the east coast of Canada resulted in the starvation of large numbers of seabirds.

Pat suggested I return to Vancouver's Greenpeace Headquarters in a week's time and interview Adam Reichman, an expert on fishery concerns on the west coast of North America. I arrived for the meeting and moments later the teletype started clacking away saying the Rainbow Warrior, Greenpeace's flagship, had just been sunk killing the ship's

photographer. The vessel had been docked at Auckland, Australia, to protest against nuclear testing and the dumping of its waste into the ocean killing whales, seals and dolphins. A subsequent investigation revealed the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior was carried out by the French government in response to Greenpeace's attempt to stop them from doing nuclear testing. Two French divers were charged with manslaughter and sentenced to 10 years in prison. They served two. Thirty years later, pockets of crude oil remained in some locations. The corporate owners of the ship returned it to service under a different name as an ore carrier. It took four years for Pat's prediction to come true when in 1989 the worst oil tanker disaster occurred dumping 11,000,000 gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound and its oil slick covered 1,300 miles of coastline killing hundreds of thousands of seabirds, otters, seals and whales.

In 1982, I read an article in a 'Photographic Society of America' (PSA) magazine about bird photographer Isidor Jeklin of Don Mills, Ontario. He specialized in the photography of birds at the nest with high-speed strobes. I wrote to Isidor and a short time later visited him in his Toronto apartment. One bedroom had been turned into a shrine for the displaying of his 300 medals from the Photographic Society of America along with many enlarged prints. Both Isidor and Tom were at the top of their game in winning first or second medals from the PSA for wildlife photography. Isidor and I talked and he agreed to work with me to publish a book on bird photography. It was an absolutely crazy idea. Upon leaving, Isidor entrusted me with 50 of his best medium format transparencies. Our mission was to produce a book on bird photography. Naive, my original idea was to self publish without a distributor. It wasn't only crazy; it was insane. Luckily for me, we managed to get a publisher.

In October, 1983, I wrote to J. Fenwick Lansdowne, the greatest bird painter of the 20th century. He lived in Victoria on Vancouver Island. I sent along several prints taken by Isidor and me over the years. He got back to me with a Foreword to Isidor's and my proposed book.

A year later, Isidor and I co-authored the title, 'The Art of Photographing North American Birds'. The first press run took place in Altona, a small village south of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The publisher paid for Isidor and I to fly to Altona to oversee the printing. Isidor and I talked and agreed to meet midway between our homes and photograph prairie birds as it would be an incredible experience for me to work with a much published bird photographer. He, afterwards me, donated duplicate slides to Cornell University.

Upon receiving the first printed copies, I mailed off copies to Eliot Porter, Roger Tory Peterson and Eric Hosking. Roger was the world's most renowned ornithologist.

Eric was a pioneer bird photographer from the United Kingdom. Eliot wrote back with kind comments. Roger got back to me with a testimonial. Eric was critical of my photographs. After fuming for several days, I decided to listen to a bird photographer with 50 years experience under his belt and sent my high-speed strobes back to the manufacturer to have the cords lengthened from eight to 15 feet. After all, Prince Philip and some of his buddies used to join Eric to have some fun photographing birds. According to Eric, the huge blind was capable of accommodating several men and had everything except hot and cold running water. Our book went into second, third and fourth printings and low and behold Galahad Books in New York, Eliot's publisher, took on its printing and distribution.

Richard B. Trethewey, a charter fund-raiser of Ducks Unlimited in British Columbia, lived in Maple Ridge and I sometimes photographed birds on his farm. Richard was instrumental in reintroducing the Canada Goose and Wood Duck back into the Lower Mainland and other parts of British Columbia. He created a unique fundraising idea and travelled the world to seek the generosity of many high-profile artists to donate their works for a leather-bound art folio 'The Birds of North America' with a custom container box. He arranged for the printing of 1,250 limited edition copies each selling for \$1,000. He arranged for Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, to provide the Foreword. Richard gave me the address of His Royal Highness and coached me on how to write a letter. Although composing a letter to Prince Philip with number one of 50 limited edition sleeved copies, it was never sent.

With the success of the first book, Isidor, Lawrence F. Parsons, Isidor's bird photographer associate, and I hit on a bold plan. We would do a trilogy and do two new titles, 'North American Birds A History of the Art' and 'Photographing North American Birds Perfecting the Art'.

PHOTOGRAPHING PRAIRIE BIRDS

In June 1984, I joined Isidor and Larry in Altona, for a two week learning experience photographing prairie birds. The first thing I did was present Isidor with copy number 1/50 of the sleeved book. Through correspondence, we learned a pair of Swainson's Hawks were nesting in a poplar shelterbelt some 60 miles west of Altona in a farming community called Pilot Mound. Finding this area so productive, we decided to spend our entire time working its sloughs and treed areas. My time with Isidor, who had more than 20 years experience photographing birds, proved to be an opportunity of a lifetime and I learned more tricks of the trade than believed possible. Each new piece of information was small by itself, but when all the pieces were added together my increase in knowledge was enormous. For the first couple of days, Isidor, Larry, and I

checked out the different areas in order to line up some different nesting situations. Larry used a telescopic golf ball retriever with a large mirror to check out the progress of nests 10 to 20 feet up in trees. As the mirror was positioned above the nest, Isidor would use a pair of binoculars to report whether a nest was empty, contained a clutch of eggs, or had young.

In the past, I often worked a nest for several days but would dismantle all my equipment each night and go home. At Pilot Mound things were very different and it was not uncommon for Isidor and Larry to put eight or more hours in their blinds to photograph a single nesting situation. Most mornings, they would be up at daybreak and shooting for three hours before breakfast since that was when the birds were most active feeding. A drizzle did not put them out of operation since their flash heads were covered by clear plastic turkey freezer bags which allowed the light to pass through without any loss in intensity or shift in colour. Instead of using cumbersome three-legged tripods in the water to hold the flash heads, they used 1" x 2" hardwood stakes of various lengths and pushed them into the mud. The flash heads were then duck taped into position. If the ground was hard, Isidor used a four-foot length of straight iron bar pointed at one end. He used a sledge hammer to pound the bar to make holes in the hard ground for blind posts. Since we were camped near our equipment, Isidor and Larry didn't dismantle the set-up but placed garbage bags over their cameras and tripods just before retiring. Isidor told me how he managed to get pics of both adults at the nest at the same time.

Says Isidor, "It's easy. Just sit in the blind with the flap partially open and when both parents are within a few feet, close the blind and both adults will come in to feed." He had another trick. He had a 4x4 foot wooden frame with chicken wire. He'd weave branches into the mesh and place it behind the nest and use one flash to illuminate the false backdrop. The last task on the agenda each evening before we crawled into our sleeping bags was a detailed accounting of the day's events. It was always from these notes our books would be written.

For ground nesting birds, Isidor drove several stakes into the ground in a bee-line with the nest, the blind and the stakes. By following along these stakes, he was able to come and go using the blind as a cover without ever disturbing the brooding parents. When setting up at one nest, I talked to Isidor about steers pasturing nearby and mentioned his project stood between them and their watering hole. Since I had been raised on a farm, I knew cattle were extremely curious, and so recommended he dismantle his project upon leaving it daily. Isidor told me not to worry as he and Larry would be sleeping in the truck nearby and would be able to hear the movements of the cows. When Isidor got up in the morning, he found the nest, the blind and the tripods trampled into the mud.

One day, I listened and watched while Isidor and Larry discussed the setup for a Swainson's Hawk nest in a shelter belt 20 feet up in a poplar tree. In Altona, they had rented four sections of steel construction scaffolding and long spruce planks and had left them near the nest tree. Isidor decided a green field on the east side of the shelter belt would make an ideal backdrop for photography especially when the adults were backlit by early morning sun and flying into the wind. Larry placed a ladder against the tree and climbed up to check out the young hawks. The pair took an entire morning putting up the scaffolding and planking. They worked at setting up for half an hour and then would leave for an hour to allow the female time to brood or feed her babies.

For safety, Larry ran out guy ropes from the four corner posts of the tower which were tied off to two trees and two stakes that had been driven into the ground. Once Larry had pulled the five planks up by rope to the top of the scaffolding, he added a three foot high railing for additional safety. Once the scaffolding was up, Larry placed a blind on top. Isidor climbed the tower and entered the blind. With the camera on the tripod, he was shooting down and into the nest. Since birds prefer to fly into the wind when landing, Isidor was able to obtain several profile shots of the female alighting at the nest. Twice the male appeared with a ground squirrel for the female. He would land in a nearby field, devour part of the animal, and then scream for his mate to come for what was left of the squirrel. She always flew down to him for the food. At the nest, she would tear the squirrel into tiny morsels and feed it to her young. During his hours in concealment, Isidor managed to take several photographs. Larry and I also took our turns in the blind.

Our time at Pilot Mound certainly produced its share of excitement and my diary for 21 June read: 'At 6 p.m. a freak storm hits without warning and winds go from zero to 40 or 50 miles per hour in less than one minute. I start the car and race to the blind. The dust coming from the ploughed-in summer fallow between us and the scaffolding is so thick it is difficult to see the tower. I drive the car near the scaffolding and jump out with Larry on my heels. By this time one of the guy ropes has pulled up a stake and the rope is blowing wildly in the wind. The storm has also torn open the Velcro slits on the blind, and all four sides are blowing at the same height as the blind's roof. The wind is so severe I have to run crouched down to keep from being blown over. Just as I am within 20 feet of the tower, a second stake pulls loose and the tower begins to go over with Isidor still in the blind on top of the 20-foot platform. Miraculously, the scaffolding gets hung up in the nest tree and does not crash to the ground. Both flash heads shoot past the nest, and anything not nailed down is blown into the next shelter belt. During all the commotion Isidor still has not become visible. As Larry climbs the ladder against the nest tree, Isidor emerges clutching his camera. He is badly shaken but not injured.

Realizing this, I race back to the car and grab my camera and tripod and begin taking photographs. Incredibly the sky is blue with big towering cumulus clouds.'

In the evening, we returned with the truck and toppled the twisted scaffolding with a winch. A check of the nest revealed the young hawks had come through the ordeal unscathed. Isidor told me this incident was the most dangerous he had experienced in his 70-plus years. In those two weeks, I learned more about bird photography than in the previous eight years. The day after returning home, Carol left with the children and drove back to Prince Albert to visit with her Mom and relatives. I stayed home to take care of a floundering family portrait and wedding business.

PHOTOGRAPHING SEABIRDS, REEF ISLAND, HAIDA GUAI

Anne's parents gave grant money to me and in May 1985, I accompanied Dr. Anthony J. Gaston, Co-ordinateur of Seabird Research, Migratory Birds Branch, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Ian L. Jones, a graduate student from the University of Toronto, to Camp Impossible on tiny Reef Island located just south of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) to photograph seabirds. Ian was doing his thesis on the vocalizations between parents and the young of Ancient Murrelets. The night of my arrival, I accompanied Tony and Ian up a switch-back trail beneath mature stands of Sitka Spruce and Western Hemlock. It was raining and my outer garments consisted of hip waders and a rain slicker as protection against the weather. We used headlamps as we followed along safety ropes running from tree to tree along a steep path to a banding station. When the lamps were turned off, it was impossible to see one's hand before their face. I observed the Ancient Murrelet burrows had been numbered and plastic knock-down tabs placed at the entrance to each burrow to monitor the comings and goings of the parents. Tabs knocked inward or outward indicated an entry or an exit. Untouched tabs signified a burrow was inactive. A night or two later, I tagged along with the scientists to a banding station below one of the study areas. We sat in the dark with our headlamps off and heard murrelets fly in from the ocean and make heavy crash landings. Instantly, a scientist's headlamp went on and the expert, with the aid of a fish net, would make a zig-zag dash down the slope in pursuit of a dazzled murrelet. Breeding murrelets were measured, weighed, banded, and data recorded. The work involved high risk and the previous year Ian tumbled down a slope resulting in the use of a helicopter to get him to the nearest hospital. The scientists, with their headlamps, were able to see non-breeding adults perched in the treetops singing. Some were shot with the aid of a flashlight. At the study area, one of Ian's experiments involved watching parents coming and going to the burrows using a magnification night scope and a parabolic microphone to listen to the chirruping calls between the chicks and their parents.

The female Ancient Murrelet, scarcely larger than a robin in size, lays a clutch of two hen-sized eggs at the end of a burrow. Twenty percent or more of the body weight of the bird is taken up in developing the eggs over almost a month. After the second egg is laid, both parents share in incubation duties. Small circular incubation patches, which lie on each side of the breast bone, are underlain with heavy vascularized skin supplying the necessary heat for the eggs' development. As one parent occupies the nest, the other feeds on plankton coming with the cold upwellings of the North Pacific Ocean. Parent birds alternate nest duties in three night intervals during the 35 days of incubation. Both chicks hatch at the same time and for a day or two are brooded by a parent. While in the burrow, the chicks are not fed. Shortly after darkness, two nights after the chicks have hatched, the parents vacate the burrow but remain nearby, vocalizing strongly to encourage the young birds to emerge. When the chicks are out of the burrow, the parents fly out to the sea and remain calling from offshore. Like wind-up toys the chicks are all but non-stoppable as they flounder down the slope and tumble into the sea in response to their parents' calls. The chicks swim all night and by dawn are far out to sea. They mature rapidly as they perfect their diving skills and soon become independent of parental care. Ian's dedication to his thesis brought this new information to scientists wanting to know more about the life history of seabirds.

From my notes: Night 15-16 May 1985: 'Spent 2 ½ hours laying on hillside staring up into the huge primeval rain forest of Sitka Spruce so dark I was unable to see my hand six inches in front of my face. Could see the stars through the odd opening in the trees. Slightly robin-like chirrup coming from birds sitting in trees. Night 16-17, 'Up hill at 12 midnight. Few birds were landing as it was windy and the surf rough. Could it be the birds decided to defer the fledge for better ocean conditions? Young would have been bashed on the rocky shoreline last night. If so, would the parents feed their young during the prolonged stay in the nest? Caught two birds on hill - one a breeder - other a prospecting non-breeder. Breeders quickly measured and weighed & banded and then released where captured so they could carry on with parental responsibilities. The non-breeders were given to me and brought down hill but the camera battery failed and the system would not fire. Noted the iris was quick to dilate or contract when I removed light source'. 17 May: 'Spent most of day trying to revive the rechargeable battery to no avail and the battery after several hours hooked up to a generator remained on the 'replace' position when checked on the voltmeter. Decided to try wiring the camera to operate off a 6-volt heavy duty lantern battery. It worked. 26 May: About 2:30 a.m. had one hell of a chase to catch a bird. It was a Cassin's Auklet, a much smaller bird with pale blue yellow iris'. 23 May: 'Although Reef Island has never been logged, the hum of distant saws could be heard from neighbouring islands. Is civilization moving in?'

With the realization the adult murrelets exchanged incubation duties very third night, my chances of getting a photograph was very slim to none. Tony came up with a suggestion. They'd give me non-breeding birds for my photography. I moved down the slope to an abandoned murrelet colony. Tony and Ian had done a study the previous year and an entire colony abandoned their burrows. It was within a five minute walk of base camp. Now when bad weather set in, I could box my gear and quickly carry it to my tent. From my notes, "First bird placed in burrow and made exit moments later at a dead run. Tripped mechanism but the short delay - a few microseconds - results in only the front half of the bird in flight on Polaroid film. As a result, I dug up the box containing the micro-switch and reburied it at the burrow entrance. With a bit of trial and error, an adult took its own picture.' A few years later, The 'Living Bird' magazine, the most prestigious ornithology publication in North America, ran a story about the Ancient Murrelet and used two images from my trip to Reef island. The in flight shot made the front cover.

In 1986, I continued photographing birds and writing articles about my experiences hoping to be published. A few stories made it into magazines. Most of my time was spent writing letters to the descendants of early bird photographers and writing for the proposed two new titles. To make a long story short, my passion with birds resulted in a failed marriage leaving me in deep depression and in debt up past my eyeballs. It took years to realize my passion for birds was superseded by my zeal for designing and writing "picture" books.

By 1987, my wife Carol of 18 years, told me to hit the road. She had enough dealing with a dreamer husband. After a separation, followed by a divorce, I got just plain lucky in the early part of 1988 and fell in love with Tina Sarglepp. She became the love of my life and then wife. Just in time for the cherry blossoms to bloom, we travelled to Victoria and took Fen Lansdowne and his wife Helen to the Empress Hotel for dinner. The following day, we visited him at his studio cottage in nearby Oak Bay. He'd just completed a painting of a male Wilson's Warbler. He offered to sell it to me at a much reduced price, but being near broke, I had to decline his gesture of generosity. For the next several years, anything pertaining to bird photography had to be placed on a back burner. It would take years to pay my bills. Bird photography was not to be a part of my life until 2006 after a sabbatical of 20 years. It took that long to climb out of an enormous debt.

My birding friend David Allen Hancock, President of Hancock Publishing, helped me to climb out of debt by buying the rights to my three books. Called 'Mr. Eagleman', David has several webcams set up in different parts of British Columbia. It's the most visited web site in the world.

NEOPHYTE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHER DAMON S. CALDERWOOD

In 1990, Damon Calderwood contacted me at the suggestion of an employee at Broadway Cameras, Vancouver. He and a friend were planning a trip to jungles in South America and wanted to learn more about my photo-electric triggering device. When Damon returned from his trip, he wanted me to teach him about the challenges of photographing birds but I was newly married and much too busy trying to dig myself out from going bankrupt. It was Damon who reintroduced me to Glenn Ryder, the man who was responsible for getting me involved in bird photography in the first place. Some of Damon's video footage taken before his meeting me was incredible and one time he set up his camera on a pair of Virginia Rails and went bird watching for a couple of hours before returning to change tapes. As a result he never knew what he had captured until he played the tapes back in the evening. Most of the tape was boring, and he fast-forwarded until catching footage of the female rail incubating eggs with one young chick hiding under her wing. As the bird turned the eggs, groomed, and interacted with the chick, the male skulked up and offered her a tiny fish. When the male offered the food, the female masticated the tiny fry by running her beak up and down the minnow's entire length to tenderize its flesh. She then took the fish in her beak and allowed the male to repeat this procedure. They passed the minnow back and forth several times before the female fed it to a baby.

In 1994 the World Wildlife Fund contacted me enquiring about giving a collectable copy of Isidor and my bird book to Prince Phillip during a royal visit. I signed the book, 'Sincerest Best Wishes to Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip. Take time to enjoy the birds'. Enclosed was a photocopy of the exchange of children's letters between Philip's sister Theodora and Phyllis Landale, her childhood friend. Dick Cannings presented it to the Queen's husband on a bird watching trip to Iona Island in Richmond. He gave Prince Philip limited leather bound and sleeved edition number 50/50. Philip told Dick, "I could find all these birds in my own back yard." Dick went on to write several books on birds. One was about the decline in population of the Spotted Owl. Dick became the New Democratic Member of Parliament for the Okanagan.

One day Richard Trethewey called to say 40 pairs of Great Blue Herons were nesting on his property and one of the nests was in a large spruce adjacent to his house. Damon and I leaned a 20-foot ladder against the tree and were barely able to boost our way up onto the tree's lowest limb. From there, we worked our way upwards through eight to 15 inch in diameter branches to a nest cradled in a large branch about 10 feet out from the main trunk. This nest was 70 feet above ground and was ideal for

photography as the camera could be placed so a patch of green trees served as a backdrop. I got in touch with Jock Hume, my hiking buddy from my time in Haney as a cop, and he put a rock-climbing harness and rope at our disposal. We decided to entwine the rope around the tree and tie it to the branches. I made up two long pieces of rope with carabiners at both ends. One end was clipped to Damon's and my belts while the other end was fastened to the rope making it possible to fall out of the tree. Damon decided to set up his video camera and take some footage to learn more about the comings and goings of the adults. Great Blues, like most members of the heron family, begin to incubate after the laying of the first egg. Because the birds only produce one egg every two days, there are 10 days between the hatching of the first chick and the last. This nest contained five young. By studying the video footage, Richard, Damon and I saw first hand the cruelty taking place in the wild. The older young received all of the food and when not feeding, resting, yawning, or defecating, spent their time pecking the runt. The film caught the older chicks pecking the last born and shoving it to the edge of the nest. Damon discovered the dead undersized baby at the base of the tree but did not know the facts until examining the film. During one sequence, the video footage captured both parents at the nest feeding regurgitated fish to the babies.

Away from bird photography for many years while climbing out of near bankruptcy, I began going into the bush with Damon to renew my passion. One of the first birds Damon and I found on Richard's farm was a pair of Song Sparrows. Because of a drought, young coho fingerlings became trapped in the many tiny runoff streams and were easy pickings for the adults. They didn't bother to feed on insects and instead brought back only the protein rich fry to their young.

During my time away from bird photography, I loaned Damon my custom-made strobe unit for several years and he began to have an impressive collection of photographs. Doing an acting jig in Dawson City, he photographed Yukon Birds. Years earlier, I had talked to Eliot Porter about doing a second book on bird nest photography. He told me we'd both produced books with a single pic of a species. He said, "Why don't you photograph pairs of birds from the opening of the babies' eyes until they leave the nest". That's exactly what he did and Waite Publishing printed 1,000 copies of his title, 'Flights of Fantasy Photographing North American Birds'. To help cover the cost, Richard arranged for Ducks Unlimited to take 250 copies.

That fall, Tina and I drove back to Ontario. It was a working holiday for me and I managed to generate enough income by taking aerial photos for my son's business to pay for our 3 ½ month trip and I was able to collect family history and material for a book tentatively titled, 'Canadian Gold Hunters: A History in Photographs'.

Just before leaving, I purchased a second custom-made high-speed strobe unit identical to mine. Years earlier, a wildlife photographer reached out to me about my system. He had bought an expensive high-speed flash unit from Ken Olson. Retiring, he sold it to me. Both units needed some minor repairs. A photographer friend in Alberta said he knew an electrical expert. I dropped both units off to him. On the way back from Ontario, we stopped off to pick everything up. He'd cut all six cords away from the flash heads. The idiot didn't know the power came from the 12 volt battery through the powerful cords. He said he'd put things back the way they were and ship everything back to me. Instead, he vanished.

BURNS, OREGON, 2006

In May, 2006, Damon, his friend David James and I drove down to Burns, Oregon, for almost two months of bird photography. My protégé had been down the year before but had gone too early before the nesting season had gotten underway. Before the trip, I plastered decals on all four sides of my Sports Utility Vehicle with my company name, logo, phone number and URL globalbirdphotos.com. It was a real cop magnet and the federal, state, local and tribal police had to check out the purpose of a visit from their Canadian neighbours. Before leaving, I purchased two expensive flash units with three heads. The units fired at 1,000 second at full power, 1/2000 second at half power and 4,000 second at one quarter power. At the fastest flash duration of 1,4000 of a second, all flight photographs were blurry.

A few days after our arrival, David and I drove out to see the progress of a Snowy Plover nest Damon had discovered a few days earlier. We headed right into a terrible storm with extremely strong winds. We opted to use the vehicle as a shield from the winds for the birds. We returned home and told Damon of our bad luck and decided to return in the morning. We arrived back at the site at 7:00 a.m. to grey skies, but within half an hour the sun came out and it warmed up. We were able to set up the blind without chasing the female off the nest or the male from coming in with food for the babies. The wind completely died down and Damon managed to get several shots of a parent and the babies. We left shortly afterwards leaving the female hunkered down on the two babies and the one egg. I returned to the area on May 30, America Memorial Day, and dune buggies and motorcycles had driven all over the flats. Snowy Plovers are threatened and it occurred to me that the area should have been posted advising people to stay away during the nesting season.

On 9 June, I found a family of Mountain Bluebirds nesting in an abandoned American Robin's nest in a juniper about four feet off the ground. I drove back to find Damon and told him of my rare discovery. He referenced his collection of books in the evening and

found reports of Mountain Bluebirds appropriating the nest of an American Dipper and an American Robin, but neither of these old reports had been documented with photographs. We decided we'd take as many photographs as possible when the babies were a little older to document our discovery. Damon wrote an article that was published in 'The Living Bird', the most prestigious bird magazine in all of North America.

On 14 June, I was photographing the bluebirds when a trooper from the Oregon State Police, Fish and Wildlife Branch, saw my SUV with all the decals and engaged me in conversation. He examined my box saw and noticed a dead branch cut eight inches underneath the robin's nest. He took photographs and told me he was going to give me a ticket for harassing wildlife, to wit: a Mountain Bluebird. I tried to explain the baby bluebirds, because they normally nest in tree cavities, were quite vocal by screaming for food in an unprotected nest and have been predated by shrikes, hawks or owls, all of which were nesting nearby. I explained that without my intervention they'd be predated. He gave me the ticket even though the parents were coming in to feed every two to three minutes while I stood not more than five feet away outside the blind. By this time the babies had pin feathers and would stand on the outside lip of the nest. He gave me a ticket but didn't ask me to dismantle my equipment. Instead, he allowed me to carry on but suggested I apply for a permit to photograph wildlife. He said the maximum fine was \$299 American.

I asked the trooper for his business card.

He gave me one asking, "Why do you want my business card?"

I answered, "Because I'm going to write about you in a book someday."

Two days later, I had my day in court before Judge Dewey Newton. It was a strange situation. We talked and I never plead guilty. Dewey just assumed I was guilty. He explained the maximum reduction was only 25 % because of new legislation. He then asked when I was planning on leaving for home and I told him two days. He fined me \$225 American. He asked if I was ever planning on returning to Oregon. I told him the world was too big and the rest of my life too short to ever come back to the same place twice. He then asked if I could afford to pay \$25 a month for nine months with the payments starting in July. Curious, I asked him what would happen if the monthly payments were not paid. Dewey said the ticket was only enforceable in Oregon and it expired after one year. Believing I might someday write about the incident, I paid the fine.

What I told to the trooper came to fruition almost exactly to the day a year later when confronted by three biologists in British Columbia's sunny Okanagan. This time, instead of the fine being \$299 American, it was a whopping \$2,250,000 Canadian. It's quite the story. Canadian Wildlife Service investigators pulled every card in the deck to bring Damon and I to our knees and before the dust settled they had 16 Canadian government witnesses plus the US trooper. The trooper sent a copy of the ticket to the CWS along with his notes. He lied through his teeth by omission. He never mentioned my telling him about the shrikes, hawks and owls. He never mentioned the adults were coming in every two to three minutes to feed the babies. His comments, along with his photographs, were faxed up to Canada. His pictures showed my blind being five or more feet from the nest. He said it was two feet. They are in 'Bird Photos, 2006' along with the bird photos of our time in Burns, Oregon. His ticket made me a recidivist, a big legal jargon word for repeat offender. It was more fodder for the prosecution. The purpose of our entire trip was to photograph nesting birds. I

On 19 June, I had a most interesting day photographing a pair of Loggerhead Shrikes for eight hours. I managed to get a shot of a parent bringing in a three inch long Alligator Lizard and ramming it down the throat of a single baby. It must have been 25 % of the baby's body weight. The young were seven or eight days old and had their eyes wide open. Often the parents would be away for periods as long as 15 to 20 minutes hunting. They used the limb of a dead juniper tree, referred to as a "butcher" block, directly behind my blind and I could watch them carve up a small bird, vole or mouse. Once the animals were dissected, the adult birds would take turns flying in with the pieces of their victims. Quite often their visits turned out to be a feeding frenzy with both birds at the nest at the same time. I found the shrike nest was extremely tidy when compared with many other species. Once I saw a baby appear to be choking on food but then realized it was regurgitating a food pellet. When this occurred, a parent would fly in and eat the pellet.

On 21 June, I dropped into the wildlife office and on a whim invited the local wildlife biologist to come out and assist me in photographing the shrikes. The trooper's office was adjacent to the biologist's office. The trooper gave me a big smile. The biologist drove out and took photographs of the entire set up while I placed the lights in position. He then went into the blind while I waited nearby in the SUV. I was really beginning to get worried as 20 minutes lapsed before he took his first photograph. It was the longest 20 minutes of my entire trip. Finally, there was a flash, followed by three more in quick succession. I walked up to him and explained the pair of adults had likely been away hunting and had now caught and carved up something on the butcher block and they'd be coming in on a regular basis for the next several minutes. He asked if he could remain in the blind and try to get some more photographs. We later had lunch and he

told me if I'd been staying in Oregon for a longer period or returned next year, he'd give me the necessary permit to photograph birds.

I talked to the state biologist in Salem and told him I was photographing birds in Burns and we talked about the ticket. I explained the weather had been cloudless for the past week and farmers were mowing down as much as 80 to 100 acres of hay in a single day causing all kinds of deaths to birds. He tried to tell me farmers held off with their cutting of hay until mid-July when the nesting season was pretty much over. We argued. He was talking to a farm boy. I told him maybe he should take a drive to Burns to see for himself the many cleared hay fields. He finally suggested I call a federal biologist in Washington, DC. I did and told her about my ticket from the state trooper. She explained there weren't any permits in place allowing or disallowing photographers to take pictures of birds. According to her, I should only have been charged if I'd been the cause of the Mountain Bluebird adults deserting their young.

During our trip to Burns, I spent more time observing Damon than actually waiting in a blind and taking photos. Knowledgeable about the habits of nesting birds, Damon could find 10 nests to my one and unlike me when starting out, he knew what he was doing. He'd set up three blinds on three active nests and rotate back and forth taking photographs of the young just before fledging. It was exhausting work but his success rate was far higher than the norm. He managed to photograph 27 species over a two month period. Damon kept impeccable notes. It looked like hieroglyphics to me but he was able to determine the exact day the young babies of ground nesting birds with big eggs would hatch. Usually, within half a day, all the eggs hatched and the dried out babies were gone. He did something totally frowned upon with birders and biologists. He cut away vegetation to expose the nest and babies for photography. He responded, "I'm there the whole time. The eggs hatch, the babies dry out, and are gone. It all takes place in just a few hours". He maybe wasn't exactly right. Possibly, if the vegetation hadn't been cut, the young may have stayed in the nest for a day or two.

By coincidence, there was a large glass kiosk a few miles out of Burns highlighting the early bird photography of William L Finley. He and his associate's photographs appeared in the 'Bird Lore' and 'National Geographic' magazines prompting US President Teddy Roosevelt to set up large federal bird reserves across the United States. In 1984, collecting material for a tentative book title, 'Photographing North American Birds A History of the Art', Bill's Granddaughter sent me articles about her grandpa along with black and white original prints of him sitting in a tree with his huge format camera not more than 20 feet from nesting egrets. His images resulted in the termination of shooting birds for women's hats.

Damon and I got into an argument about his staying out too late and getting up too late as he and his friend would always meet me for dinner around 9:00 p.m. It took them time to dismantle and then drive back to town. By the time we finished eating and cleaning up for bedtime, it was always after midnight. I told him, "Damn it, Damon. You go to bed after midnight and get up late and by the time you get out to a nest the day is half over."

OKANGAN BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY, 2007

In the early spring of 2007, I persuaded Tina to purchase a camera system identical to mine and participate in my passion of bird photography. She bought a Canon camera body, a 140-280 zoom and a 185-macro zoom. She wanted to get into insect photography. The macro zoom lens would make it possible to cover an area 1x1.5 inches from a distance of three feet. She was super excited. Canon had a strobe unit capable of being powered down to an extremely short flash duration. In layman's terms, there was full power, 1/2 power, 1/4 power, 1/8 power, all the way down to 1/64 power. These units could be set to all fire in unison with a transmitter fitted on the shot shoe of the camera. I bought seven flash units and two transmitters.

Tina's Mom and brother lived in Summerland in BC's Okanagan so she arranged for Damon, her and I to stay in the guesthouse during two months of bird photography. By this time, I'd commissioned the building of a trailer to my specifications to hold scaffolding capable of reaching nests 20 feet up in a tree. Two sections of scaffolding were made of expensive aluminum and two sections were made of the less expensive steel. Our very first nest was a pair of Pygmy Nuthatches located in a dead pine tree 10 feet off the ground near the top of Giants Head Park. It was only a ten minute drive where we were staying.

On 9th June, Tina and I sat together in a blind on top of 10 feet of scaffolding and photographed a pair of Black-billed Blackbirds. I wrote, "The nest was 8' up in a willow right on Vaseaux Lake. It was about 16" in diameter in a clay or mud bowl with branches and 2 1/2 deep covered with one opening in the side. Male's tail feathers are larger than females. Two ready to fledge young. I thought magpies would bring in quail chicks but no - they feed grasshoppers and berries."

On 10 June, I wrote in Tina's journal. "First day working with Tina and it was a real joy to have her up in the blind sitting next to me. Sort of what I've been working towards my entire life. Got the lights and everything set up & discovered after the first hour one light wasn't plugged in (fill light). Both parents came in at fixed intervals and we took about

100 shots. I'm hoping that at least a few are OK. Had a visit from the park ranger. It was the beginning of the end for the renewing of my passion doing any bird photography.

On 11 June, Tina and I were photographing pairs of Orange-crowned Grosbeaks and Grey Catbirds. The two nests were only six feet apart. We were both in the same blind. She was photographing the catbirds out one peep-hole while I photographed the grosbeaks out the other side. That night, I downloaded my pictures and on zooming in to an eyeball of the male grosbeak found an oblong rather than a circular catchlight in the eye. Although powered down to eight power, the flashes were not capable of stopping the birds in flight. The Canon technician and I talked and my questions were above his pay scale. The units were probably firing at 5,000 of a second. My plan was to try 1/16 or 1/32 power the following day. My calculations suggested 1/10,000 or 1/20,000 flash duration. The mathematics suggested the light sensitivity would require camera settings to offset the small amount of light. It left me with a conundrum to figure out the solution.

My life turned upside down on the 13 June when photographing a family of Yellow-breasted Chats. It caused me to have a mental breakdown. I spent two weeks in a psychiatric hospital. Angry, I sold my scaffolding and trailer for 20 cents on the dollar and never ventured into the bush for many years. When I did go back into the forest, Damon was married and had two sons.

The people responsible for triggering my dormant bipolar condition all know who they are so don't need mentioning in my memoir. It saddens me to know a few birders who know so little about our feathered friends could be so cruel. One 'So Heavenly Bound he was No Earthly Good' crusader took Damon's book to big book store chains and demanded they be removed from their shelves. Books were returned with pages torn. One birder threatened the boycotting of the book distributor's warehouse. Another suggested spreading the word to the world about the web site 'Waite Air Photos Inc' to cause financial difficulties unaware the business had been sold to my son three years earlier. There is the high road and the low road. There are two rules to live by: don't steal, don't lie. Any person taking a witness stand swearing to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth often perjure themselves by omission.

The Canadian Wildlife Service investigators, biologists, scientists and Justice Department lawyers brainstormed and connived to pull every dirty trick in the book. They had 16 Canadian government witnesses and the US trooper lined up to testify if things went to trial. It just keeps on getting worse and worse. I got one written apology. My wife Tina suffered the most. She kept a 72 page journal of our time in the Okanagan.

Our comments in it were about 50/50. No one talked to her and no one ever apologized. They didn't want Damon's and my head on a platter; they wanted our entire carcasses.

Being bipolar, it took me time to figure out that Damon and I were victims of a blotched sting operation initially carried out by birders and scientists and then law enforcement officers and lawyers. They all went up the ladders by taking us down to the bottom rung.

After being charged and going to court, Justice Department lawyers raised fines for a repeat offender from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for a second offense. As a result, I didn't venture into the bush to look for birds for 10 years. Damon kept photographing birds at nests but confined his photography to parks and often visitors watched him go about his photography. Damon found the nest of a Wilson's Warbler at Allco Park in North Maple Ridge. A weasel came in and snatched a baby. It happened in the blink of an eye. He let nature take its course and moments later the weasel was back and cleaned out the nest. Within a very short distance, Damon set up on a pair of Swainson's Thrush. He called me to say a Douglas Squirrel had just taken a baby. He stayed within a few feet of the nest to keep the Bushy-tailed Rat at bay until my arrival. We set up two cameras. When the squirrel came in to take the final chick there was only time for one still pic but Damon managed to take a video.

One day a policeman, who was also a photographer, and I drove to Kamloops to meet the biologist who had kept in touch with me over the years. He told us where to go to find nesting Burrowing Owls. It took one phone call, not from me, and an owl photographer was at the site at 5:00 a.m. the following morning. The birds were chased back and forth across a field for hours. I sat in the jeep thinking why couldn't the area have been posted, 'Stay away, Burrowing Owl study in progress? Fines \$5,000?' In hindsight, why wasn't the chat nest posted? The government had several kiosks with wildlife information for the public yet the chat study was never mentioned. They had a sign, "Beware of bears and rattlesnakes" but it was posted on First Nations land nine miles from the chat study.

In 2020, I began brainstorming the idea with Damon to write a book, 'The Evolution of Bird Photography'. Before even reaching out to potential participants, low and behold, Larry Parson's daughter Petra, found mention of her Dad on my website globalbirdphotos.com. She contacted me. We talked and she remembered my visit to her parents' place when she was a child. She was enthusiastic about the project and began scanning many of her Dad's slides for inclusion in Damon's book project.

Way back in December 1990, Tina purchased a copy of brothers Bob and Peter Woods' book, 'Bright Wings' and gifted it to me for Christmas. Bob and I corresponded. He

remembered me. I asked if he'd participate in our venture. He was in. Since Petra and Bob lived within blocks of each other in Kingston, Ontario, she collected his slides and scanned them for him. The Wood brothers' photography, like mine, began back in the early 1970s with their primary focus being warblers, the most elusive birds in the avian world and over a period of forty years, they photographed 32 of the 38 warblers nesting in Ontario. The two brothers were high school teachers and often gave talks to groups of 40 to 100 attendants at such places as the Toronto Zoo, Metropolitan Convention Centre and the many camera clubs.

Bob and Damon talked and both were totally on the same wavelength with respect to how to go about photographing birds at the nest. The veteran commented, "Many of today's bird photographers are going out with their two-foot long lenses and taking shots of larger birds doing a fly-by and for what purpose? Let them spend a few days in a blind photographing warblers and maybe they'll learn a thing or two about the life history of their subjects in the process. People look at the pics in our books and don't have any idea of the work involved to get just one perfect image. Back in the day, it cost a buck a shot. Now, cameras have every bell and whistle allowing photographers to take several frames a second and the only cost is the wear and tear on their camera body."

Often, I looked at Ursula Dubrick's wildlife photographs on her website udubrickphotos.com. A woman, many of her images showed the maternal bond between parents and young. I reached out to her. She was in.

Damon has always tried to juggle too many balls in the air at the same time. He's a husband, father, actor and school teacher. He has two sons in acting. When in a trance-like breakdown in 2007, I told Damon his destiny was to become another David Suzuki, Canada's equivalent to David Attenborough, the English broadcaster, biologist, natural historian and writer. My vision was of him much older, white-haired, and giving talks to thousands about the Earth's fragility. It's only now the pressure with Damon is beginning to ease off and he's getting back into the forest where he belongs and hopefully being given the opportunity to teach others about his growth over almost 35 years.

The advancement in cameras and flash units is far beyond anything I'd ever dreamed about 50 years ago. The opportunity today to learn about warblers and the other passerine birds and their secrets is within reach and Damon has the experience to share that knowledge with everyone with video footage. With YouTube, he can reach millions about the right way and not the wrong way to photograph birds at the nest.

It would be interesting to know exactly what rats, squirrels, weasels and the other meat eaters fed to their babies. If I wasn't an octogenarian, I'd consider trying to find the nests of predators and finding out their diet. Damon will have to carry the baton. I'm too old!

I've put some of Tina's and my 77 pages of notes taken in the Okanagan, 2007.

There are low roads and high roads. There are thieves and liars.

I'll always take the high road and I'll never steal or lie!

So many people jumped on the bandwagon to bring me down over a family of birds that didn't die. The 16 Canadian witnesses and one American witness lined up to testify against me were coached on what to say and not say by Justice Department lawyers. They were told what to put in and what to leave out. It's all in the 'Pick-a-Part' chapter.

SIR JAMES BOND II: A MEMOIR



American Robin - *Turdus migratorius*
Stan Pavlov
June 15, 1983, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Veery - *Catharus fuscescens*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
May 15, 1981, Toronto, Ontario



Bewick's Wren - *Thyromanes bewickii*
Stan Pavlov
June 1, 1983, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Marsh Wren - *Cistothorus palustris*
Donald E. Waite
June 1, 1983, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Black-capped Chickadee - *Parus atricapillus*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
November 15, 1982, Goshen, Ontario



Red-breasted Nuthatch - *Sitta canadensis*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
June 1, 1981, Scarborough, Ontario

SIR JAMES BOND II: A MEMOIR



Barn Swallow - *Hirundo rustica*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
June 15, 1981, Vaughan, Ontario



Tree Swallow - *Tachycineta bicolor*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
July 10, 1981, Oshawa, Ontario



Western Flycatcher - *Empidonax difficilis*
Donald E. Waite
May 29, 1978, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Willow Flycatcher - *Empidonax traillii*
Donald E. Waite
May 15, 1978, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Least Flycatcher - *Empidonax minimus*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
March 15, 1976, Toronto, Ontario



Ruby-throated Hummingbird - *Archilochus colubrus*
Isidor Jeklin & Lawrence F. Parsons
April 14, 1981, Hamilton, Ontario



American Dipper - *Cinclus mexicanus*
Donald E. Waite
May 3, 1982, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



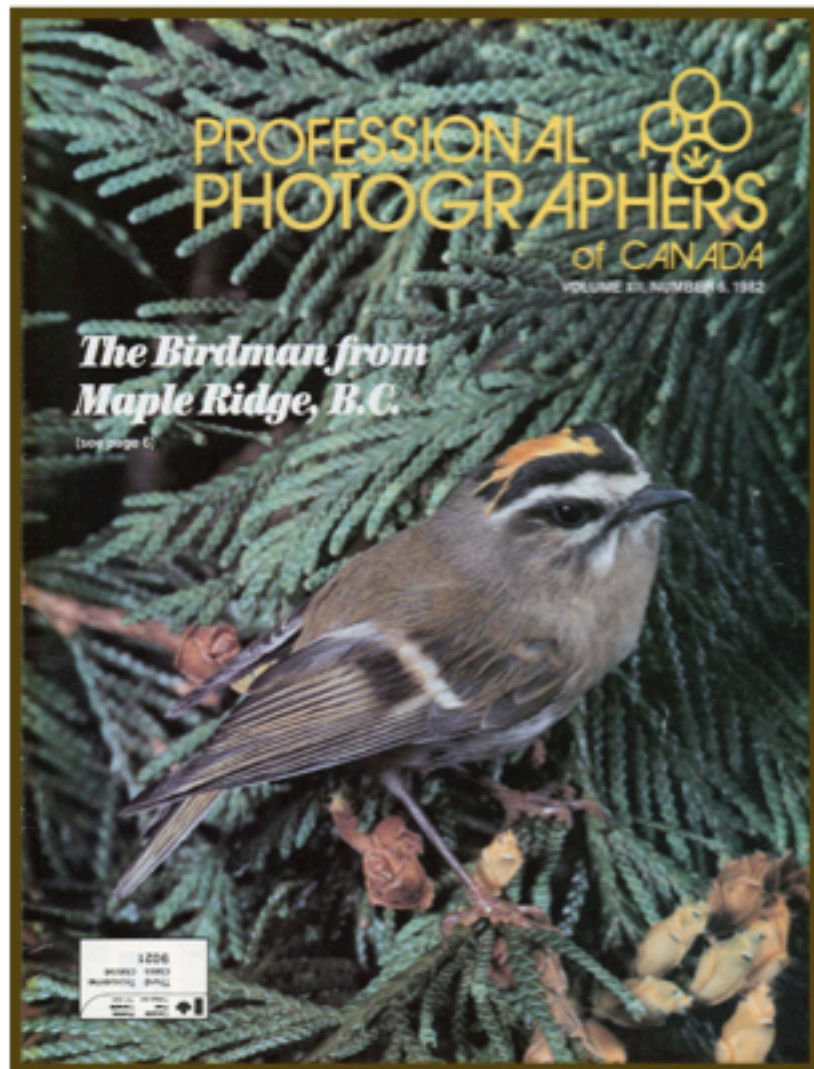
Rufous Hummingbird - *Selasphorus rufus*
Donald E. Waite
August 17, 1983, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Swainson's Thrush - *Catharus ustulatus*
Kevin S. Waite
May 4, 1982, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Varied Thrush - *Ixoreus naevius*
Donald E. Waite
June 3, 1983, Maple Ridge, British Columbia



Male Golden-crowned Kinglet - *Regulus satrapa*
Donald E. Waite
June 1982, Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada



Eastern Screech Owl - *Otus asio*
Lawrence F. Parsons
May 5, 1977, Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Female Spotted Sandpiper - *Actitis macularia*
Donald E. Waite
July 14, 1986, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada



Female Long-eared Owl - *Asio otus*
Lawrence F. Parsons
February 25, 1990, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

SIR JAMES BOND II: A MEMOIR



Male Eastern Bluebird - *Sialia sialis*
Isidor Jeklin and Lawrence F. Parsons
May 21, 1980, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada



Male Black-crowned Night Heron - *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Lawrence F. Parsons
May 21, 1983, Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Male Northern Goshawk - *Accipiter gentilis*
Lawrence F. Parsons
June 25, 1983, Gelert, Ontario, Canada



Male Baltimore Oriole - *Icterus galbula*
Lawrence F. Parsons
June 25, 1983, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

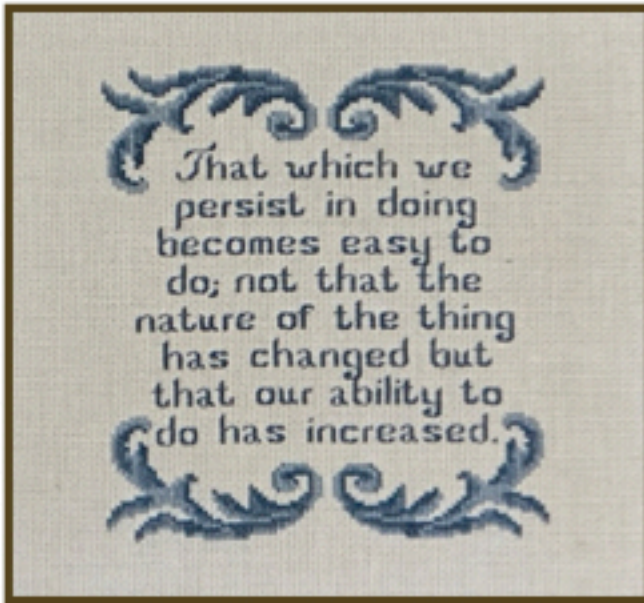


Female Wilson's Snipe - *Charadrius gallinago*
Donald E. Waite
June 15, 1982, Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada



Male Pileated Woodpecker - *Dryocopus pileatus*
Lawrence F. Parsons
June 15, 1983, Newtonville, Ontario, Canada

50 YEARS A BIRD PHOTOGRAPHER



It's hard to believe I became involved in the photography of birds at the nest over 50 years ago and if I'd known then what I know now and its cost for my passion turning into an obsession there would be no chance in Hell of me ever stepping into a forest to even look at a bird. It cost me a big fortune. It cost me a marriage. It caused me to have a mental breakdown. It's my most sincere hope neophyte bird nest photographers can learn from the mistakes of the pathfinders of the past. The advances in cameras in just the past few years is nothing short of miraculous and the increase in ornithologists' knowledge about our feathered friends has grown exponentially. It's very likely we've learned more about the lives of birds in just the past 10 years than all the preceding years. Watching adult birds doing their daily task of caring for their young is so fascinating that it can become an obsession. The

hardest thing in a memoir is to get everything in chronological order. My time as a RCMP file clerk taught me all about filing systems. All my exchanges of letters written between 1974 and 1991 are arranged in chronological order by date and bound up into books. Some people say I'm weird. Others say I'm crazy. A few say I'm a genius and one or two think I'm a crazy genius. My correspondence letters and my field notes are a large part of my memoir.

In the beginning, I wrote to everyone and anyone to garner knowledge about bird nest photography. On the top of the list was the Audubon Society (The premier environmental non-profit society focused on the conservation of birds and their habitats) and The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (The globally renowned college of higher learning dedicated to the study, appreciation and the conservation of birds). In 1984, the exchange of correspondence between staff at Cornell and me suggested we were penpals!

If someone had told me back in 1974, when I began photographing birds at the nest that in 2007 I'd be charged criminally for photographing a family of birds that didn't die I'd have thought it absurd. That's exactly what happened. The potential for fines was a staggering \$2,250,000. A few of the 'So Heavenly Bound they were not Earthly Good' birders in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley scrutinized a book I co-authored in 1984 and one my company published in 2007. They were intended to show people the beauty of birds. Instead, birders read every line and studied every picture to show only the negative. None acknowledged the beauty of birds. None admitted I was part of a sting operation costing the Canadian taxpayers in excess of \$1,000,000. None acknowledged my mental breakdown.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY, 1974 UNTIL 1986

When bird nest hunter Glenn Ryder walked into my Maple Ridge camera store in the spring of 1974 looking for a long lens for his camera system, I had no way of knowing this chance meeting would result in a profound change in my life. He had been hired by the provincial government to assist in the production of a four volume set of books about the 'Birds of British Columbia' being planned by R. Wayne Campbell, the Curator of Birds and Mammals at the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria. Glenn was leaving shortly for a few months of bird nest searching in the Okanagan Valley with a photographer who was not remotely aware of the challenges of bird nest photography. It was Glenn's job to find nests for the photographer. Glenn showed me several of the shooter's slides and I recall thinking, with a little practice, I should be able to do as well at bird photography. His images never made it into the book series simply because he knew so little about his subjects. He groomed nests by removing vegetation thereby exposing baby birds for long periods of time without proper shade from the sun.

About this time, a camera store employee loaned me a copy of Eliot F. Porter's book, 'Birds of North America, A Personal Selection' and many a night I studied Eliot's beautiful bird portraits. His incredible images

appeared in North America's two volume National Geographic's 'Songs and Garden Birds' and 'Water, Prey and Game Birds' in 1964. Eliot used high-speed strobes to capture flight photographs of parent birds coming in to brood, feed and do janitorial duties with their young. Elliot's photographs contributed half of the books' image content while Canada's Sir Allan C. Brooks, a much decorated sniper in the First World War, paintings made up the rest of the content for the two volumes. Allan's home was in Vernon, a city in the Okanagan. It must have been providence that I met Arthur M. Peake at the local coffee shop and learned years earlier he had been an assistant to Brooks. Art used a shotgun to shoot the birds to be used as specimens for Allan to paint.

The following spring, I photographed some birds at nests but they almost always ended in failure due to my lack of knowledge. In the beginning, my attempt to photograph several nests in a single day was sheer stupidity. Art gave me access to his many shelves of books on ornithology and I slowly began to understand the habits of my feathered friends and how to find nests. Eventually, I began to photograph a single family of birds over several days.

It was best to wait until after the babies opened their eyes to begin photography. The parent birds, with so much invested, never abandoned their babies.

After locating a nest with eggs or young, I should have waited until the babies' eyes opened and then begin to take photographs until they fledged. The last day is always most interesting because the parents and babies were used to my strobes, my blind and me. If the nest was exposed with the use of tiebacks, it was imperative to put everything back to normal and even add cover to further conceal the nest.

When first beginning to photograph birds, I was far too impatient and my subjects suffered as a consequence. In most cases the entire session lasted only one day and the birds were not given the opportunity to adjust to my presence. As a novice bird photographer, I was unable to find anyone with whom to apprentice and authors of books on the subject, although all emphasized the welfare of the birds must be first and foremost, never went into any details about their mistakes and how to avoid them. All of them stressed any photography at a nest attracted predators such as rats, squirrels, weasels, snakes, hawks and owls. Predators have to eat meat to stay alive. It's the circle of life.

By 1977, I was averaging 40 hours a week in the forest during the months of April through July. During this trial and error period, I met Stan Pavlov who said he could find more nests in a day for me to possibly photograph in a week. He was managing an estate of 160 acres nestled under the peaks of the Golden Ears Mountains north of Maple Ridge. Discovering the truth of his claim, we soon became good friends. Stan became my assistant and we began spending more and more time exploring his property in search of birds.

My notebook for 16 May 1978 shows how little I knew about the length of time Varied Thrush young stayed in the nest, 'contained three week old young.' 15 April 1979, 'Found dipper nest under bridge over Blaney Creek at UBC (University of British Columbia) Research Forest. It was found within a yard of where Stan Jr. found one last year. It looked like a miniature-sized moss igloo and was built on top of a rock.' 19 April, 'Up to UBC to photograph the dippers but the creek had come up two feet due to rains making the task difficult and dangerous.' 28 April, 'Checked chickadee nest. Bumblebees had taken over.' 11 June 1980: (Marsh Hawk) 'Left at 7:15. Coming home, I found the tide had come in and had to wade through water almost to my armpits. A beaver swam up behind me and hit the water with its tail causing me to genuflect the knees & take in water at both armpits. I could have drowned.' 16 June: 'No luck, drizzle turned into a downpour. Young (Nighthawks) became lethargic so I warmed them by cupping hands and breathing on them for 10 minutes. They recovered.' 10 June 1981: Saw crow clean out a robin's nest. Flew up into the nearest tree and literally beat the life out of the young bird with its powerful beak. 11 June: Spent entire day photographing crows. The adults regurgitated food for the young. They spent the day sleeping, preening, stretching, yawning and dumping. The ready to fledge babies would rise up out of the nest with pink mouths fully agape each time a parent came near the nest.' I was unknowledgeable about my subjects and my actions were unconscionable.

In January, 1981, I flew to Edmonton to meet well-known bird photographer Thomas J. Webb. His ra-

zor-sharp competition prints made me realize I was not filling the frame tightly enough and my flash equipment was not capable of stopping the quick movements of birds in flight resulting in blurred pictures and on returning home most of my pics went into a trash can. Tom suggested purchasing an extremely powerful high-speed custom strobe system to photograph birds in flight. Tom's unit was similar in many ways to the lighting system I used in my portrait and wedding studio utilizing front, side and back lighting. I contacted Ken Olson, its manufacturer, and ordered one of his flash units.

PHOTOGRAPHING SEABIRDS, TRIANGLE ISLAND, 1981



Anne Vallée (1958-1982)

In August, 1981, I had a rare opportunity to visit Triangle Island, a seabird reserve, located in the Pacific Ocean north of Vancouver Island. It is world-renowned to ornithologists since it has an enormous bird population comprised of Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Tufted Puffins, Pelagic Cormorants, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots and Common Murres. Richard J. Cannings, Assistant Curator of the Vertebrate Museum at the University of British Columbia, and I flew by helicopter to the remote island. Anne Vallée, a doctoral student, was collecting data for her thesis on 'The Breeding success of the Tufted Puffin' on the seabird reserve. Upon reaching the island, we were greeted by Robin Cohen, Anne's assistant. The two young women were staying at a base camp in a trailer they had named the Triangle Hilton.

Almost immediately, Robin, Dick and I left camp to climb Puffin Rock, a steep 700-foot ascent, to visit Anne. She came out of her blind to greet us. She had been watching the comings and goings of seabirds with a spotting scope.

The bird I especially hoped to photograph on Triangle Island was the Rhinoceros Auklet, a most challenging task since the parent rhinos exchanged brooding duties at night and only for a couple of days before the two babies make their dash to the ocean.

One night, I set up a flashlight with an infrared acetate over its lens and directed its narrow beam to a gizmo that in theory fired the camera any time an adult broke the faint red glow of light when going into its burrow. I took up a position on a cliff face in the pitch darkness and heard a number of birds crash land in the tufted hairgrass and salmonberries. After landing, the adult would begin making a mewling call which was answered by a chick. When I turned on my headlamp, I saw a most attractive bird with an orange-brown bill with horn—hence the name rhinoceros—and white plumes behind its eye and bill. It made sense that if I was able to see the faint red glow from 50 feet away, there was no possibility of any pictures. When a rhino took off from a cliff and hit me squarely on the back of the head, I decided to come down and call it quits. All I had managed to photograph was a deer mouse. The only worthwhile photograph of a seabird I managed to obtain on the entire trip was of a colony of Common Murres nesting on the ledges of the precipitous cliffs. The spot where I set up the camera and tripod had to be one of the smelliest places on earth. Murres are highly sociable seabirds and live in large colonies. One cliff shelf, quickly estimated, contained at least 500 birds. For survival against marauding crows and gulls, murres breed synchronously incubating their eggs and brooding their young at the same time. When the chicks finally leave their rock shelves all at once and plunge 200 to 300 feet into the sea, the bonanza for predators is short-lived because of the brief time the young birds are exposed. I was regrettably the cause of incubating and brooding murre parents to fly off the cliff leaving a shower of eggs and babies to fall into the ocean. The pilot of a jet from Canadian Forces Base Comox happened to see me perched on the cliff face and decided to do a flyby for a looky-loo. I tried to wave him off but instead he flew right over me and we could see each other's eyeballs. It was a case of the Air Force not being told Triangle Island was a seabird reserve.

Some notes from my trip: 19 August: 'From 10:00 p.m. to 3:45 a.m. spent curled up on the side of a cliff hoping to photograph a Rhino Auklet coming to its nest. Attire consisted of wool socks, hiking boots, blue jeans, 2-T shirts, cotton shirts, wool sweater, cotton vest, nylon coated rain pants and jacket, wool gloves & headlamp



Common Murre - *Uria aalge*

Donald E. Waite

August 15, 1981, Anne Vallée Ecological Reserve,
Triangle Island, British Columbia, Canada

500 Murres incubate eggs and brood chicks on a rocky ledge over the Pacific Ocean.

and two scarves across my face. From 10:00 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. quite a number of birds came in. Their landings were very rough in the salmonberry and tufted hair grass. Saw one adult with six inch long skinny fish hanging from its mouth. Saw a brown rabbit feeding on hair grass. Saw mice. Once I heard the whir of wings and instinctively brought my hands up to cover my face. One bird upon taking off immediately above me hit me on the side of the head. Heard the crashing of the waves. As it became darker, it also became much windier and colder. At one two hour stretch from 12:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. it was extremely dark. The birds communicated by adults making mewling or moaning sounds. The adults walked to the burrows from wherever they landed. Their arrival in the pre-dawn light seemed to be the smoothest. Gave up at 3:45 a.m.' 20 Aug: 'Took shots of Robin weighing puffin chicks & taking wing measurements. She took ticks off 1 puffin chick'. It occurred to me. Why was she interfering with Anne's study by removing the ticks?

Anne returned to Triangle Island the following year to continue her research, but unfortunately lost her footing while climbing Puffin Rock and fell to her death. Two years later, in 1984, Anne's father came to British Columbia from Quebec for the purpose of presenting a cheque to a graduate student at Simon Fraser University to study seabirds. We met with an associate professor and had lunch. I casually mentioned exchanging correspondence with the Victor Hasselblad Foundation's research and development department about the possibility of placing a movie or video camera on top of their still camera so a photographer could study the activities of birds on a monitor from a distance and fire the camera remotely when the subject struck the right pose. The university's ornithologist became quite excited and suggested supplying him with copies of our correspondence to make an application to the foundation for a grant. He explained the money would be earmarked to purchase



a camera-video system for me to test on seabirds. He got \$25,000 but used it to purchase two inflatable boats.

That fall, I interviewed Dr. Patrick Moore, President of Greenpeace International, about the impact of man's activities on nesting areas of seabirds. The most obvious concern was from a major oil spill from super tanker traffic coming from Valdez in Alaska, at the northern terminus of the Alaskan Pipeline, which comes down along the whole coast of British Columbia and then southward all the way down to the Panama Canal. He said an oil spill given the types of winters and the fact machinery always sooner or later breaks down would inevitably result in a major disaster to seabirds and if it occurred off the north end of Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, or off the Alaskan Panhandle, it could mean the destruction of millions of seabirds from one tanker spill. Another real serious problem was the depletion of the food supply for large nesting colonies

of seabirds up and down the west coast shoreline and on the many islands. There are tremendous fleets of foreign ships operating just off the coast dwarfing the types of fishing boats used by Canadian fishermen. Their nets are scooping everything off the sea bottom leaving it barren. Deep sea gill net fishing has a tremendous bycatch of seabirds with nine mile long nets. The 300 boats in their fleets operate close to the islands and diving birds are caught by the thousands. Supertankers are more likely to get into trouble when just offshore due to rocks, the build up of currents, cross eddies and waves bouncing off the rocky coastline resulting in a much more confused and dangerous sea. Canadian laws demand seven and eight hundred foot long super oil tankers stay outside the 200 mile limit. If one of these ships broke up off the coast of Vancouver Island, half of the shoreline could be inundated with oil depending on the weather, currents and location of the spill. Another serious problem was the habitat destruction caused by intensive logging operations along the BC coast reducing the available area for birds nesting in old growth timber. He mentioned overfishing on the east coast of Canada resulted in the starvation of large numbers of seabirds.

Pat suggested I return to Vancouver's Greenpeace Headquarters in a week's time and interview Adam Reichman, an expert on fishery concerns on the west coast of North America. I arrived for the meeting and moments later the teletype started clacking away saying the Rainbow Warrior, Greenpeace's flagship, had just been sunk killing the ship's photographer. The vessel had been docked at Auckland, Australia, to protest against nuclear testing and the dumping of its waste into the ocean killing whales, seals and dolphins. A subsequent investigation revealed the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior was carried out by the French government in response to Greenpeace's attempt to stop them from doing nuclear testing. Two French divers were charged with manslaughter and sentenced to 10 years in prison. They served two. Thirty years later, pockets of crude oil remained in some locations. The corporate owners of the ship returned it to service under a different name as an ore carrier. It took four years for Pat's prediction to come true when in 1989 the worst oil tanker disaster occurred dumping 11,000,000 gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound and its oil slick covered 1,300 miles of coastline killing hundreds of thousands of seabirds, otters, seals and whales.

In 1982, I read an article in a 'Photographic Society of America' (PSA) magazine about bird photographer Isidor Jeklin of Don Mills, Ontario. He specialized in the photography of birds at the nest with high-speed strobes. I wrote to Isidor and a short time later visited him in his Toronto apartment. One bedroom had been turned into a shrine for the displaying of his 300 medals from the Photographic Society of America along with many enlarged prints. Both Isidor and Tom were at the top of their game in winning first or second medals from the PSA for wildlife photography. Isidor and I talked and he agreed to work with me to publish a book on bird photography. It was an absolutely crazy idea. Upon leaving, Isidor entrusted me with 50 of his best medium format transparencies. Our mission was to produce a book on bird photography. Naive, my original idea was to self publish without a distributor. It wasn't only crazy; it was insane. Luckily for me, we managed to get a publisher.

In October, 1983, I wrote J. Fenwick Lansdowne, the greatest bird painter of the 20th century. He lived in Victoria on Vancouver Island. I sent along several prints taken by Isidor and me over the years. He got back to

me with a Foreword to Isidor's and my proposed book.

A year later, Isidor and I co-authored the title, 'The Art of Photographing North American Birds'. The first press run took place in Altona, a small village south of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The publisher paid for Isidor and I to fly to Altona to oversee the printing. The publisher printed 2,000 hardback covers and 12,000 paperbacks.

Isidor and I talked and agreed to meet midway between our homes and photograph prairie birds as it would be an incredible experience for me to work with a much published bird photographer. He, afterwards me, donated duplicate slides to Cornell University.

Upon receiving the first printed copies, I mailed off copies to Eliot Porter, Roger Tory Peterson and Eric Hosking. Roger was the world's most renowned ornithologist. Eric was a pioneer bird photographer from the United Kingdom. Eliot wrote back with kind comments. Roger got back to me with a testimonial. Eric was critical of my photographs. After fuming for several days, I decided to listen to a bird photographer with 50 years experience under his belt and sent my high-speed strobes back to the manufacturer to have the cords lengthened from eight to 15 feet. After all, Prince Philip and some of his buddies used to join Eric to have some fun photographing birds. According to Eric, the huge blind was capable of accommodating several men and had everything except hot and cold running water. Our book went into second, third and fourth printings and low and behold Galahad Books in New York, Eliot's publisher, took on its printing and distribution. Over seven years, it sold 44,000 copies.

Richard B. Trethewey, a charter fund-raiser of Ducks Unlimited in British Columbia, lived in Maple Ridge and I sometimes photographed birds on his farm. Richard was instrumental in reintroducing the Canada Goose and Wood Duck back into the Lower Mainland and other parts of British Columbia. He created a unique fundraising idea and travelled the world to seek the generosity of many high-profile artists to donate their works for a leather-bound art folio 'The Birds of North America' with a custom container box. He arranged for the printing of 1,250 limited edition copies each selling for \$1,000. He arranged for Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, to provide the Foreword. Richard gave me the address of His Royal Highness and coached me on how to write a letter. Although composing a letter to Prince Philip with number one of 50 limited edition sleeved copies, it was never sent.



With the success of the first book, Isidor, Lawrence F. Parsons, Isidor's bird photographer associate, and I hit on a bold plan. We would do a trilogy and do two new titles, 'North American Birds: A History of the Art' and 'Photographing North American Birds: Perfecting the Art'.

Author, mentor Isidor Jeklin, and his assistant, Larry F. Parsons, at Pilot Mound, Manitoba.

PHOTOGRAPHING PRAIRIE BIRDS, 1984

In June 1984, I joined Isidor and Larry in Altona, for a two week learning experience photographing prairie birds. The first thing I did was present Isidor with copy number 1/50 of the sleeved book. Through correspondence, we learned a pair of Swainson's Hawks were nesting in a poplar shelterbelt some 60 miles west of Altona in a farming community called Pilot Mound. Finding this area so productive, we decided to spend our entire time working its sloughs and treed areas. My time with Isidor, who had more than 20 years experience photographing birds, proved to be an opportunity of a lifetime and I learned more tricks of the trade than believed possible. Each new piece of information was small by itself, but when all the pieces were added together my increase in knowledge was enormous. For the first couple of days, Isidor, Larry, and I checked out the different areas in order to line up some different nesting situations. Larry used a telescopic golf ball retriever with a large mirror to check out the progress of nests 10 to 20 feet up in trees. As the mirror was positioned above the nest, Isidor would use a pair of binoculars to report whether a nest was empty, contained a clutch of eggs, or had young.

In the past, I often worked a nest for several days but would dismantle all my equipment each night and go home. At Pilot Mound things were very different and it was not uncommon for Isidor and Larry to put eight or more hours in their blinds to photograph a single nesting situation. Most mornings, they would be up at daybreak and shooting for three hours before breakfast since that was when the birds were most active feeding. A drizzle did not put them out of operation since their flash heads were covered by clear plastic turkey freezer bags which allowed the light to pass through without any loss in intensity or shift in colour. Instead of using cumbersome three-legged tripods in the water to hold the flash heads, they used 1" x 2" hardwood stakes of various lengths and pushed them into the mud. The flash heads were then duck taped into position. If the ground was hard, Isidor used a four-foot length of straight iron bar pointed at one end. He used a sledge hammer to pound the bar to make holes in the hard ground for blind posts. Since we were camped near our equipment, Isidor and Larry didn't dismantle the set-up but placed garbage bags over their cameras and tripods just before retiring. Isidor told me how he managed to get pics of both adults at the nest at the same time.

Says Isidor, "It's easy. Just sit in the blind with the flap partially open and when both parents are within a few feet, close the blind and both adults will come in to feed." He had another trick. He had a 4x4 foot wooden frame with chicken wire. He'd weave branches into the mesh and place it behind the nest and use one flash to illuminate the false backdrop. The last task on the agenda each evening before we crawled into our sleeping bags was a detailed accounting of the day's events. It was always from these notes our books would be written.

For ground nesting birds, Isidor drove several stakes into the ground in a bee-line with the nest, the blind and the stakes. By following along these stakes, he was able to come and go using the blind as a cover without ever disturbing the brooding parents. When setting up at one nest, I talked to Isidor about steers pasturing nearby and mentioned his project stood between them and their watering hole. Since I had been raised on a farm, I knew cattle were extremely curious, and so recommended he dismantle his project upon leaving it daily. Isidor told me not to worry as he and Larry would be sleeping in the truck nearby and would be able to hear the movements of the cows. When Isidor got up in the morning, he found the nest, the blind and the tripods trampled into the mud.

One day, I listened and watched while Isidor and Larry discussed the setup for a Swainson's Hawk nest in a shelter belt 20 feet up in a poplar tree. In Altona, they had rented four sections of steel construction scaffolding and long spruce planks and had left them near the nest tree. Isidor decided a green field on the east side of the shelter belt would make an ideal backdrop for photography especially when the adults were backlit by early morning sun and flying into the wind. Larry placed a ladder against the tree and climbed up to check out the young hawks. The pair took an entire morning putting up the scaffolding and planking. They worked at setting up for half an hour and then would leave for an hour to allow the female time to brood or feed her babies.

For safety, Larry ran out guy ropes from the four corner posts of the tower which were tied off to two trees and two stakes that had been driven into the ground. Once Larry had pulled the five planks up by rope to

the top of the scaffolding, he added a three foot high railing for additional safety. Once the scaffolding was up, Larry placed a blind on top. Isidor climbed the tower and entered the blind. With the camera on the tripod, he was shooting down and into the nest. Since birds prefer to fly into the wind when landing, Isidor was able to obtain several profile shots of the female alighting at the nest. Twice the male appeared with a ground squirrel for the female. He would land in a nearby field, devour part of the animal, and then scream for his mate to come for what was left of the squirrel. She always flew down to him for the food. At the nest, she would tear the squirrel into tiny morsels and feed it to her young. During his hours in concealment, Isidor managed to take several photographs. Larry and I also took our turns in the blind.

Our time at Pilot Mound certainly produced its share of excitement and my diary for 21 June read: 'At 6 p.m. a freak storm hits without warning and winds go from zero to 40 or 50 miles per hour in less than one minute. I start the car and race to the blind. The dust coming from the ploughed-in summer fallow between us and the scaffolding is so thick it is difficult to see the tower. I drive the car near the scaffolding and jump out with Larry on my heels. By this time one of the guy ropes has pulled up a stake and the rope is blowing wildly in the wind. The storm has also torn open the Velcro slits on the blind, and all four sides are blowing at the same height as the blind's roof. The wind is so severe I have to run crouched down to keep from being blown over. Just as I am within 20 feet of the tower, a second stake pulls loose and the tower begins to



go over with Isidor still in the blind on top of the 20-foot platform. Miraculously, the scaffolding gets hung up in the nest tree and does not crash to the ground. Both flash heads shoot past the nest, and anything not nailed down is blown into the next shelter belt. During all the commotion Isidor still has not become visible. As Larry climbs the ladder against the nest tree, Isidor emerges clutching his camera. He is badly shaken but not injured. Realizing this, I race back to the car and grab my camera and tripod and begin taking photographs. Incredibly the sky is blue with big towering cumulus clouds.'

Showing the extended poles and flash-heads for photographing the Swainson's Hawk before the storm.

In the evening, we returned with the truck and toppled the twisted scaffolding with a winch. A check of the nest revealed the young hawks had come through the ordeal unscathed. Isidor told me this incident was the most dangerous he had experienced in his 70-plus years. In those two weeks, I learned more about bird photography than in the previous eight years. The day after returning home, Carol left with the children and drove back to Prince Albert to visit with her Mom and relatives. I stayed home to take care of a floundering family portrait and wedding business.

PHOTOGRAPHING SEABIRD, REEF ISLAND, 1985

Anne's parents gave grant money to me and in May 1985, I accompanied Dr. Anthony J. Gaston, Co-ordinator of Seabird Research, Migratory Birds Branch, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Ian L. Jones, a graduate student from the University of Toronto, to Camp Impossible on tiny Reef Island located just south of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) to photograph seabirds. Ian was doing his thesis on the vocalizations between parents and the young of Ancient Murrelets. The night of my arrival, I accompanied Tony and Ian up a switch-back trail beneath mature stands of Sitka Spruce and Western Hemlock. It was raining and my outer garments consisted of hip waders and a rain slicker as protection against the weather. We used headlamps as we followed along safety ropes running from tree to tree along a steep path to a banding station. When the lamps were turned off, it was impossible to see one's hand before their face. I observed the Ancient Murrelet burrows had been numbered and plastic knock-down tabs placed at the entrance to each burrow to monitor the comings and goings of the parents. Tabs knocked inward or outward indicated an entry or an exit. Untouched tabs signified a burrow was inactive. A night or two later, I tagged along with the scientists to a banding station below one of the study areas. We sat in the dark with our headlamps off and heard murrelets fly in from the ocean and make heavy crash landings. Instantly, a scientist's headlamp went on and the expert, with the aid of a fish net, would make a zig-zag dash down the slope in pursuit of a dazzled murrelet. Breeding murrelets were measured, weighed, banded, and data recorded. The work involved high risk and the previous year Ian tumbled down a slope resulting in the use of a helicopter to get him to the nearest hospital. The scientists, with their headlamps, were able to see non-breeding adults perched in the treetops singing. Some were shot with the aid of a flashlight. At the study area, one of Ian's experiments involved watching parents coming and going to the burrows using a magnification night scope and a parabolic microphone to listen to the chirruping calls between the chicks and their parents.

The female Ancient Murrelet, scarcely larger than a robin in size, lays a clutch of two hen-sized eggs at the end of a burrow. Twenty percent or more of the body weight of the bird is taken up in developing the eggs over almost a month. After the second egg is laid, both parents share in incubation duties. Small circular incubation patches, which lie on each side of the breast bone, are underlain with heavy vascularized skin supplying the necessary heat for the eggs' development. As one parent occupies the nest, the other feeds on plankton coming with the cold upwellings of the North Pacific Ocean. Parent birds alternate nest duties in three night intervals during the 35 days of incubation. Both chicks hatch at the same time and for a day or two are brooded by a parent. While in the burrow, the chicks are not fed. Shortly after darkness, two nights after the chicks have hatched, the parents vacate the burrow but remain nearby, vocalizing strongly to encourage the young birds to emerge. When the chicks are out of the burrow, the parents fly out to the sea and remain calling from offshore. Like wind-up toys the chicks are all but non-stopplable as they flounder down the slope and tumble into the sea in response to their parents' calls. The chicks swim all night and by dawn are far out to sea. They mature rapidly as they perfect their diving skills and soon become independent of parental care. Ian's dedication to his thesis brought this new information to scientists wanting to know more about the life history of seabirds.

From my notes: Night 15-16 May 1985: 'Spent 2 ½ hours laying on hillside staring up into the huge primeval rain forest of Sitka Spruce so dark I was unable to see my hand six inches in front of my face. Could see the stars through the odd opening in the trees. Slightly robin-like chirrup coming from birds sitting in trees. Night 16-17, 'Up hill at



Author installing the photo-electric triggering device to photograph Ancient Murrelets on Reef Island, May 1984.

12 midnight. Few birds were landing as it was windy and the surf rough. Could it be the birds decided to defer the fledge for better ocean conditions? Young would have been bashed on the rocky shoreline last night. If so, would the parents feed their young during the prolonged stay in the nest? Caught two birds on hill - one a breeder - other a prospecting non-breeder. Breeders quickly measured and weighed & banded and then released where captured so they could carry on with parental responsibilities. The non-breeders were given to me and brought down hill but the camera battery failed and the system would not fire. Noted the iris was quick to dilate or contract when I removed light source'. 17 May: 'Spent most of day trying to revive the rechargeable battery to no avail and the battery after several hours hooked up to a generator remained on the 'replace' position when checked on the voltmeter. Decided to try wiring the camera to operate off a 6-volt heavy duty lantern battery. It worked. 26 May: About 2:30 a.m. had one hell of a chase to catch a bird. It was a Cassin's Auklet, a much smaller bird with pale blue yellow iris'. 23 May: 'Although Reef Island has never been logged, the hum of distant saws could be heard from neighbouring islands. Is civilization moving in?'

With the realization the adult murrelets exchanged incubation duties very third night, my chances of getting a photograph was very slim to none. Tony came up with a suggestion. They'd give me non-breeding birds for my photography. I moved down the slope to an abandoned murrelet colony. Tony and Ian had done a study the previous year and an entire colony abandoned their burrows. It was within a five minute walk of base camp. Now when bad weather set in, I could box my gear and quickly carry it to my tent. From my notes, "First bird placed in burrow and made exit moments later at a dead run. Tripped mechanism but the short delay - a few microseconds - results in only the front half of the bird in flight on Polaroid film. As a result, I dug up the box containing the micro-switch and reburied it at the burrow entrance. With a bit of trial and error, an adult took its own picture.' A few years later, The 'Living Bird' magazine, the most prestigious ornithology publication in North America, ran a story about the Ancient Murrelet and used two images from my trip to Reef island. The in flight shot made the front cover.

Female Ancient Murrelet - *Synthliboramphus intiquus*
Donald E. Waite

August 6, 1984, Reef Island, Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, Canada

A murrelet steps on a triggering device to take its own portrait in the pitch black understory of first growth Sitka Spruce.



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It may seem my primary focus was on seabirds but that's not true. Richard B. Trethewey, a charter fund-raiser of Ducks Unlimited in British Columbia, lived in Maple Ridge and I sometimes photographed birds on his farm. Richard was instrumental in reintroducing the Canada Goose and Wood Duck back into the Lower Mainland and other parts of British Columbia. He created a unique fundraising idea and travelled the world to seek the generosity of many high-profile artists to donate their works for a leather-bound art folio 'The Birds of North America' with a custom container box. He arranged for the printing of 1,250 limited edition copies each selling for \$1,000. He arranged for Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, to provide the Foreword.

In the late summer of 1984, Isidor and I co-authored the title, 'The Art of Photographing North American

Birds'. The first press run took place in Altona, Manitoba. The original publisher paid for Isidor and I to fly to the small village to oversee the printing. We talked and agreed to meet midway between our homes to photograph prairie birds. Upon receiving the first printed copies, I mailed off copies to Eliot Porter, Roger Tory Peterson and Eric Hosking. Eliot wrote back with kind comments. Roger got back to me with a testimonial. Eric was critical of my photographs. After fuming for several days, I decided to listen to a bird photographer with 50 years experience under his belt and sent my high-speed strobes back to the manufacturer to have the cords lengthened from eight to 15 feet. After all, Prince Philip and some of his buddies used to join Eric to have some fun photographing birds. According to Eric, the huge blind was capable of accommodating several men and had everything except hot and cold running water. Our book went into second, third and fourth printings and low and behold Galahad Books in New York, Eliot's publisher, took on its printing and distribution.